

Have you ever felt disappointed, dejected and discouraged? Have you ever longed to see a smile when you're feeling down but all you see around are grim faces, furrowed brows and sad frowns? I never once did in the past. However, after one unforgettable experience, I often find myself scrutinising the faces I see, searching for a smile.

I believe in the power of a smile.

A genuine smile has the power to brighten the darkest days. Indeed, a smile never fails to cheer me up by reminding me that the storm would be over and the dark clouds would eventually part.

I would never have realised the power of a smile without him. He was like any other ordinary man, from his immaculate set of red and black uniform to his crew-cut hairstyle and his neatly trimmed mustache. However, what set him apart from the other bus drivers was the sunny smile flickering across his face.

I first saw that warm smile of his when I boarded his bus that evening, after a long and exhausting day at school. Chemical names, algebraic formulae, Chinese idioms and biological terms flashed across my mind rapidly – my mind did not seem to be able to stop thinking, even for a second – but his voice, his energetic and lively voice, jolted me out of my train of thought.

“Hello!” he exclaimed excitedly and beamed at me, revealing his pearl-white teeth. It was the kind of smile that instantly warmed my heart. Unknowingly, I smiled back at him.

For the rest of the journey, I was observing how he, alone, miraculously spread his one smile to the twenty-three other passengers on board. Perhaps it was his assuring smile or the comforting aura about him; standing beside him, I felt at ease. I stopped worrying about all my troubles and problems. Instead, I looked out the window and watched the world go by.

As the bus approached the interchange, I bade the bus driver goodbye and thanked him for the enjoyable bus ride. It was his smile that had made the trip so enjoyable and indeed, it had been a long time since I had enjoyed a bus ride home so much. I smiled at the bus driver as he waved goodbye to me. As the bus slowly pulled away, I wondered if I would have the opportunity to see him again.

A smile is something that you can never give away because it always comes back to you. That is why I believe in the power of a smile.

Now that I know the power of a smile, I use it on people who are down. Seeing how my smile has spread to many others fills me with the satisfaction of having turned their day around. The next time you see someone who looks like he or she is in distress, flash them one of your brightest smiles, then wait and watch as the magic of a smile unfolds before your eyes.